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ABSTRACT

A survey of directors of intensive English programs (IEPs) about their education, experience, skills, job satisfaction, program size and structure, membership in professional associations, and interest in further training had a response from 177 professionals felt to be representative of the profession, for a 52% response rate. The five most highly rated job skills were: (1) communicating effectively across cultures; (2) maintaining an environment conducive to learning; (3) developing a staff team; (4) managing available time efficiently; and (5) evaluating the IEP's needs. The five skills the respondents rated as their best include: (1) teaching courses within the IEP; (2) communicating effectively across cultures; (3) preparing IEP schedules; (4) explaining basic IEP operating procedures; and (5) overseeing student testing and placement. The five weakest skills included: (1) computer use; (2) proposal writing; (3) arranging extracurricular activities; (4) time management; and (5) maintaining enrollments and recruiting students. Further training was desired in: (1) maintaining enrollments and student recruitment; (2) computer use; (3) designing a comprehensive curriculum; (4) initiating constructive criticism; and (5) communicating effectively across cultures. (MSE)

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The Director's Job Skills in Intensive English Programs

Barbara F. Matthies

The following job notice appeared recently: The TESL Institute has an opening for the position of Assistant to the Director to assist in the planning and management of its Intensive English as Second Language Program. Duties include advising students and supervising office staff, teaching, planning short intensive sessions and field trips, preparing brochures, handling correspondence, and other general administrative procedures. Applicant must be versed in curriculum development, teaching aids and methodologies, supervising instructional programs and conducting teacher workshops. M.A. in Linguistics, Languages, or related fields is preferred. Experience in ESL and administrative affairs is required. Applicant must be bilingual (English/Spanish), and should have an appreciation and understanding of international cultures.

If all those skills are required of an assistant, the director is apparently expected to be a universal genius cum diplomat and educator. Yet those who have held that job know that, far from feeling in full control of the requisite skills, they often muddle through a bewildering variety of tasks and confrontations that leave them exhausted at the end of the week and wondering whether their fellow intensive English program (IEP) directors have any secret formulae to account for their apparent success. Unfortunately, there are at present only sketchy guidelines addressed to the

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administrator of an IEP, although recent documents from the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) promise that more specific recommendations are forthcoming (Clark and Kearny 1983, TESOL 1983, NAFSA 1981).

In an effort to supplement the available guidelines with some specific information about IEPs around the country, 340 IEP directors were surveyed about their education, experience, skills, and job satisfaction; their IEPs' size and general structure; and a few related matters such as memberships in professional organizations and interest in further training. The 177 respondents who completed the survey (52% of the original group) represent IEPs of various sizes, both college-based and private, operating the year round or in the summer only, and in all sections of the United States in proportions that are nearly identical to those of the whole group. Thus, their responses can with some confidence be considered representative of IEP directors in general.

This report will focus mainly on the skills that they consider essential for performing an IEP director's job, but it first summarizes some of the other findings from the survey in order to provide a context for what follows.

General Information about IEP Directors

Perhaps most interesting demographically is that equal numbers of males and females responded to the survey, but an even more surprising finding is that most opinions did not differ signicantly between the sexes. The greatest difference occurred in their responses to a question about their academic rank;

as expected, among those with such positions there are twice as many males at the rank of professor and 13% more females at the instructor level, which reflects the general situation in academia. Also, the proprietary language programs (e.g., English Language Services, American Language Academy, Berlitz) hire twice as many male directors, whereas other IEPs show only a 7% difference which is in favor of females. Of course, this is in the TESL field where 70% to 90% of the teaching is done by females (Kreidler and Edmondson 1983:6). It would seem, then, that a disproportionate number of IEP directorships are held by males; this is especially true of the larger programs, according to the survey data. While this is not the place to speculate about the implications of such a situation, the information is included here as an example of issues touched on by the survey.

Turning to the subject of the IEP director's skills, one finds that 91% of the respondents have at least a master's degree but that almost none of them majored in management or administration (Table 1). However, about 15% of them were taking courses in management or computing at the time of the survey. This is worth noting because, when asked how they view their overall preparation for the job of IEP director, 73% said they wish they had had more training in management skills.

The Survey of Skills

To look into this matter of training and skills more carefully, the main part of the survey questionnaire was based on a general construct of the principal roles that an IEP director performs, the broad areas of expertise needed in carrying out those roles,

TABLE 1

IEP Directors' Major Fields of Study

	Und'gr.	Master's	Ph.D.
No degree	0	9%	67%
TESL, Applied Linguistics, Linguistics	4%	43%	18%
English, Foreign Languages	62%	30%	7%
Education, Humanities	24%	12%	6%
Sciences, Other fields	6%	3%	1%
Business, Administration	1%	2%	1%

and the director's general orientation toward dealing with people or accomplishing tasks. Conversations with other IEP directors and a review of the literature on educational administration—especially studies related to the middle level position of chair in an academic department—identified six broad areas of expertise: communicating, educating, evaluating, planning, organizing, and negotiating. Within each area were listed several activities that an IEP director would perform in the role of educator and others for the role of manager. Each of these activities was then identified with an orientation toward persons or tasks (Table 2).

TABLE 2

COMMUNICATING		
EDUCATING	P* Counsel and advise students P Teach courses within the IEP	P Develop staff team P Delegate some decision-making T Prepare detailed job descriptions
EVALUATING		
PLANNING		
ORGANIZING		
NEGOTIATING		

*P = person-oriented
T = task-oriented

For instance, expertise in the area of educating was exemplified for the director's role as educator by skills in counseling and advising IEP students and teaching courses within the IEP, both person-oriented activities; for the role of manager, this area included developing a staff team (i.e., hiring, orienting, assigning), delegating some decision-making power, and preparing detailed job descriptions the latter being a task-oriented skill. Obviously, the 25 skills that were selected for inclusion in the questionnaire cannot be considered a complete inventory or even equally relevant to all IEPs. There was a balance between skills that are designated person-oriented or task-oriented, but nearly twice as many for the manager's role as for the educator's. This seems a realistic distribution, however, since one-third of the respondents indicated that teaching is not one of their duties; furthermore, as will be shown, the managerial skills are of greatest concern to them.

Using a five-point scale, the directors answered three questions for each of the 23 skills:

1. How important is it in doing your job well?
2. How satisfied are you that you can do it well?
3. How interested are you in receiving further training in it?

Their responses were analyzed, compared, and tested for statistically significant differences primarily by the analysis of variance procedure within the SPSS computer package (Nie and others 1975). Subgroups of the respondents were created according to such variables as whether or not they are in charge of a proprietary IEP, their program's average fulltime enrollment, and their length of ESL experience, as well as the aforementioned male-female division. The opinions of the group as a whole will be reported here except where interesting or significant differences exist between subgroups.

Findings

The five most important skills for the respondents are the following, beginning with the most highly rated one:

1. Communicating effectively across culture
   (educator role, person oriented)
2. Maintaining and environment conducive to learning
   (educator role, person oriented)
3. Developing a staff team

(manager role, person oriented)
4. Managing available time efficiently
(manager role, task oriented)
5. Evaluating the IEP's needs
(manager role, task oriented)

There is a balance here between the director's dual roles of educator and manager as well as between the orientations toward tasks and people. However, if this list were extended to include the next five, a 4 to 1 ratio of managerial to educational skills would be observed; in other words, in terms of good job performance, a director's administrative skills far outweigh in importance such teaching skills as developing materials, supervising tests, and designing a curriculum. Yet most of these directors, as mentioned above, majored in areas that emphasize the latter exclusively.

This educational background is quite evident in the list of five skills rated as their best:

1. Teaching courses within the IEP
(educator role, person oriented)
2. Communicating effectively across cultures
(educator role, person oriented)
3. Preparing IEP schedules
(manager role, task oriented)
4. Explaining basic IEP operating procedures
(manager role, person oriented)
5. Overseeing the testing and placement of students
(educator role, task oriented)

Recalling that the whole list of 29 skills included

twice as many for the role of manager, one notes here a disproportionate number of the educator's skills among their best; in fact, even the two identified with the manager are activities that would transfer most readily from a teacher's experience and training. On the other hand, it is interesting that directors of proprietary IEPs, who tend to refer to themselves as managers and their programs as businesses, rate their ability on most of the educator's skills significantly lower than do other directors.

Not surprisingly, the respondents in general feel least confident about their managerial competence, as seen in this list of their five weakest skills:

1. Utilizing a computer
   (manager role, task oriented)
2. Writing proposals for IEP-related projects
   (manager role, task oriented)
3. Arranging extracurricular activities for students
   (educator role, person oriented)
4. Managing available time efficiently
   (manager role, task oriented)
5. Maintaining enrollments; recruiting students
   (manager role, person oriented)

Here again is the 4 to 1 ratio of managerial to educational skills seen earlier in the ten skills judged most important.

It would seem reasonable to assume that IEP directors might be interested in receiving training in those skills that they judge to be most important but among their weakest. On the other hand, perhaps they feel that managerial skills can be learned best

through experience while the educator's techniques require periodic updating through more formal study. Looking at their responses to the question related to their desire for further training in each skill, one finds only a mild expression of interest.

The first four skills in which directors most want further training are, as might be expected, among their ten weakest:

1. Maintaining enrollments; recruiting students
   (manager role, person oriented)
2. Utilizing a computer
   (manager role, task oriented)
3. Designing a comprehensive curriculum
   (educator role, task oriented)
4. Initiating constructive criticism
   (manager role, person oriented)
5. Communicating effectively across cultures
   (educator role, person oriented)

However, the fifth, crosscultural communication, is also high on the lists of their most important and best skills; so in expressing a need for further training, the respondents acknowledge this to be a complex activity that requires regular attention and refinement. The ability to maintain IEP enrollments and recruit students was also among the top ten in importance; directors of proprietary IEPs showed significantly higher interest in developing their technique in this area, as might be expected in the case of self-supporting programs.

Recommendations

From their answers to the skills section of the survey and from a few comments they added, it seems clear that IEP directors are concerned about their performance as managers but generally satisfied in their role as educators. Yet they express only mild interest in receiving further training, wishing they had had management training earlier. From this one can conclude that establishing channels for regular exchanges of information among these busy directors would be more appreciated than offering elaborate workshops or inservice training programs. In fact, there has been a movement recently to establish a special interest group of ESL administrators within the TESOL organization, and the Consortium of IEPs within NAFSA has published a book of essays on IEP administration (Barrett 1982). Perhaps a regular column in the TESOL or NAFSA newsletter would also meet this need, since one of the survey's findings was that 70% of the respondents belong to both organizations.

Furthermore, the fact that those who already occupy administrative positions are not strongly interested in further training should not rule out the need for attention to such training within TESL professional preparation courses. After all, if nonnative student enrollments triple in the coming decade (Scully 1981:1), it is not unreasonable to predict that many ESL teachers will be given some administrative responsibilities during their careers. Professional preparation should include some instruction related to ESL administration beyond matters of textbook selection or curriculum design; basic immigration law, supervision of staff, and record keeping should be included. Besides the topics identified by this survey, speci-

fic suggestions for such training have been provided by Swales and L'Estrange (1983).

Finally, although the complex topic of the successful IEP director's personality was not the focus of this study, the respondents did rate it by far the most important factor in choosing among equally qualified candidates for the position, with managerial and TESL skills tied for a distant second place. Perhaps some research into the personal qualities of successful directors should be conducted, looking into the relative importance to students and staff of tact, humor, trust, cultural openness, and other characteristics. This would admittedly be a difficult undertaking but worthwhile for what it could add to the findings of this study because, as Milton Saltzer explained (Barrett 1982:92):

> ...it is inevitable that a program will take on the imprint of its director's personality, capability, and effectiveness in performing the needed functions; every program reflects its director.

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